

News

Amber Rudd accuses Johnson of being a 'backseat driver' over Brexit negotiations

Home Secretary denies Cabinet split over EU withdrawal and refuses to deny ambitions of top job

By Gordon Rayner POLITICAL EDITOR

AMBER RUDD has accused Boris Johnson of being a "backseat driver" over EU negotiations after his essay on Brexit re-opened Cabinet rifts.

The Home Secretary said that she did not want Mr Johnson "managing the Brexit process" and criticised his decision to go ahead with the article the day after the latest terrorist attack.

Ms Rudd also refused to deny that she has ambitions of becoming prime minister, saying only that she has not "got time" to think about it.

Ms Rudd, a Remain campaigner during the EU referendum campaign, was less than complimentary about the Foreign Secretary in the run-up to last year's Brexit vote, saying he was "The life and soul of the party, but he is not the man you want driving you home at the end of the evening."

Asked by the BBC's Andrew Marr what she meant when she said that, she replied: "What I meant by that is I don't want him managing the Brexit process." She insisted that Theresa May is "driving the car" and, when pressed on Mr Johnson's intervention, she said: "You could call it backseat driving."

Her views were echoed by Damian Green, the First Secretary of State, who said: "It is absolutely clear to everyone that the driver of the car in this instance is the Prime Minister."

The Home Secretary described Mr Johnson as an "irrepressible enthusiast" on Brexit, who brought "enthusiasm, energy, and sometimes entertainment" to the Cabinet.

Asked if the intervention was helpful, she replied: "I think it is absolutely fine. I would expect nothing less from Boris." She said she had not read his article in



Amber Rudd said that she had been too busy to read Boris Johnson's article

The Daily Telegraph because: "I had rather a lot to do on Friday. There was a bomb that nearly went off in Parsons Green. Yesterday I chaired Cobra, I went to see the police. No, I didn't have time to read the piece."

Denying the Cabinet was split over Brexit, Ms Rudd said: "The fact is that most people, like myself, who campaigned for Remain, believe that now we need to get on with it."

"We need to do it in a way that protects the economy, that doesn't have a cliff edge, that makes sure that immigration attracts the brightest and the best..."

Many ministers are reportedly irritated by Mr Johnson's intervention, which has exposed differences of opinion in the Cabinet about the size of any Brexit bill that should be paid. Theresa May had spent much of the summer re-

storing discipline in the Cabinet over Brexit and until now appeared to have been largely successful.

The Home Secretary has been widely touted as a potential successor to Mrs May and she failed to rule out a bid for the top job. Asked about her future ambitions, she said that as Home Secretary she was focused on "keeping people safe", adding: "I haven't got time for the rest of it."

However, Conservative colleagues were unconvinced by her reticence. One senior Tory MP told *The Daily Telegraph*: "Of course she is lining herself up for a leadership bid, without any question or doubt at all. But she knows, as does everyone else in the party, that it is not in anyone's interests to have a leadership challenge before Brexit is a legal reality."

One of the biggest obstacles to Ms Rudd, if she did decide to stand in a future leadership contest is the size of her majority in her Hastings and Rye constituency, which slumped from 4,796 to just 346 in June's general election.

There has been speculation that Ms Rudd might change constituencies for a safe seat at the next election but she would only say: "I'm hoping over the next few years to build on it by showing the voters of Hastings and Rye how I can support them locally."

"I am down in Hastings and Rye most weekends working locally but my priority has to be, as Home Secretary, keeping people safe."

Meanwhile, Mr Green was asked about his own relationship with the Prime Minister by Sarah Smith on BBC One's *Sunday Politics*.

Ms Smith reminded him that Margaret Thatcher talked fondly about her deputy leader William Whitelaw and joked that "everyone needs a Willie".

Asked if he viewed himself as "Theresa May's Willie", he replied: "I was a huge admirer of Willie Whitelaw in my youth and absolutely I would be very content to have him as a role model."



JACK PUGH/GETTY IMAGES

Boris 'not thinking of top job'

Continued from Page 1

driver. Sir Vince Cable, the Lib Dem leader, said Mrs May's decision not to sack Mr Johnson shows she is "paralysed and impotent", but friends of Mr Johnson have said his article was intended to set out concerns he and fellow Cabinet ministers Michael Gove and Priti Patel have about what might be in the Florence speech, but was not a leadership bid.

However, one veteran Tory MP said: "This is a dangerous moment...he is lighting a blue touch paper that risks exploding the fragile unity of the party and the Government."

"The Prime Minister needs to be

though...if we have a leadership contest in the middle of Brexit the wheels are going to come off everything."

Mr Johnson insists Mrs May retains his full support as leader and in the Brexit talks, and he is on record as saying that he would not contemplate a leadership bid before the Brexit date.

One friend said yesterday: "All he is thinking about at the moment is his conference speech, not the leadership. There is no question of him resigning."

"He is enjoying the job of being Foreign Secretary and all he was doing with his article was trying to put some 'va-va-voom' back into the Brexit pro-

cess, as he feels there is too much negativity."

"He has never suggested he would die in a ditch fighting any attempt to pay money to the EU, and if he did start to talk about resigning I think his closest friends would lock him in a room and tell him to keep his eyes on the prize, which is Britain leaving the EU."

Jacob Rees-Mogg, who has himself been talked of as a possible future Tory leader, backed Mr Johnson's "magnificent" vision of Brexit in the 4,000-word article, and says in today's *Daily Telegraph* that Britain must not agree an "unnecessary divorce payout".

Davis: UK will still fund Europol

By Laura Hughes

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN will continue to pay to remain a part of Europol, as part of a new security treaty with the EU after Brexit, David Davis has announced.

The Brexit Secretary said security links should be secured with a new legal pact to make sure the fight against terror continued unhindered after March 2019.

Theresa May has been accused of using Britain's world leading police and intelligence services as leverage in the negotiations. In her letter triggering

Article 50 in March, she warned of a "weakened" security regime if Britain left the EU without a Brexit deal.

The Government's position has since shifted, with Mr Davis and Home Secretary Amber Rudd leaving no doubt that Brexit, David Davis has announced.

The EU has refused to discuss Europol, which exchanges crime and counter-terrorism information and intelligence, until it judges that "sufficient progress" has been made on the financial settlement, Ireland and citizens' rights after Brexit. Nevertheless, Mr Davis has drawn up proposals for a treaty to give legal backing to intelli-

gence, law enforcement and criminal justice partnerships after Brexit.

Mr Davis said: "Effective international cooperation is absolutely crucial for both the UK and the EU if we are to keep our citizens safe and bring criminals to justice. We have a deep level of collaboration with the EU on security matters and it is in both our interests to find ways to maintain it."

In a future partnership paper released this week, Mr Davis will say the UK and the EU would both benefit from making sure that there are no holes in operational ties when Britain exits the bloc.

May to use EU-Canada pact as template for trade deal

By Christopher Hope

CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THERESA MAY will pledge to use a trade deal already agreed by the European Union and Canada as a basis for a new bilateral arrangement after Brexit.

The Prime Minister will make the pledge when she flies to Canada and the US on a three-day visit tomorrow.

She has used the promise of "global Britain" making its own tariff-free trade deals to sell the benefits of Brexit to voters. Saying that an existing EU trade deal will form the template for Britain's post-Brexit arrangements will sound alarm bells with some Leave campaigners, who argue that "copy and paste" trade deals go against one of

the major reasons for leaving the EU. Ministers have also said they want the EU's trade deal with Japan - which is yet to be completed - to form the basis of Britain's post-Brexit trade deal with Asia's economic powerhouse.

In talks with Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau, Mrs May will make it clear that she wants the UK to agree a trade deal with Canada as soon as possible. It would be based on the EU/Canada deal that took seven years to negotiate and formally takes effect from Thursday this week. The deal - known as CETA - eliminates 98 per cent of all Canadian tariffs between the EU and Canada.

Mrs May will also say that Britain will act "as champions for free trade that delivers for all parts of society".

Sir Vince: I'm the 'alternative prime minister' in waiting

By Laura Hughes

POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

SIR VINCE CABLE has insisted he is a credible candidate to be prime minister and the Liberal Democrats could be biggest party after next election.

Despite having just 12 MPs, the Lib Dem leader said it needed to assert itself as a serious party of government.

Sir Vince said one of his key messages to voters would be "projecting the idea that I'm an alternative prime minister".

Speaking ahead of the party's annual conference in Bournemouth, he told *The Andrew Marr Show* on BBC One: "As leader of the third UK party, my job is to be the alternative prime minister."

Asked if the Lib Dems could get a Commons majority, Sir Vince said: "It's possible that we could break through. If British party politics starts to break up, if the traditional structures start to break up, and that could well happen, we are extremely well positioned with moderate, sensible policies."

His comments were compared to a speech made by David Steel, the former Lib Dem leader who prematurely told activists in 1981: "Go back to your constituencies and prepare for government."

Sir Ed Davey, Lib Dem MP for Kingston, told Sky News he believed "the vast majority" of the public would want Sir Vince as leader "if you put him up against Theresa May or Jeremy Corbyn".



NAL GORDON FOR THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

On the go Boris Johnson leaving his Oxfordshire home yesterday after a weekend of outspoken views on Brexit and speculation about his prime ministerial ambitions.

Positivity of Boris has set a fresh tone and a vision for the Government

Comment

By Jacob Rees-Mogg

MP FOR NORTH EAST SOMERSET

Managed decline: the two dire words that have underpinned too much of government policy since the Second World War. With the glorious exception of Margaret Thatcher, the machinery of the state seemed to accept that the nation would never be as successful in the future as it had been in the past. This downbeat view of the world underpinned our membership of the European Union. Poor little Blighty

could not cope on her own, so needed "big brother" to provide protection. At its worst, it led us to neglect democracy for fear that we would be left behind.

Boris Johnson has magnificently rejected this depressing view in his tremendous article in defence of Brexit. He has set a new tone for the debate and a vision for the government. Since that day of legend and song when we voted to leave the EU, the administrative apparatus has been to promise competence in negotiation to achieve the best in difficult circumstances. In the general election campaign, all that was promised was managerial efficiency, not a reinvigoration of the British economy. The policy seemed to be directed by reluctance rather than enthusiasm and was phrased in terms of the process of leaving rather than the benefits once we had left. Boris has changed that, and has made the Government and Mrs May stronger by

so doing. Brexit is a generational opportunity. The UK remains one of the world's most important nations, a major economy, an important military power and a global financial centre. This has not been entirely dissipated by being in the EU, but our prospects

A small, but noisy, group see this as a leadership bid, but in truth it helps the Government and Mrs May

were limited by the failings of the narrow European sphere. If efficiency, not the next century's growth seemed central to come from other parts of the world. Europe is the past and the future belongs to India and China, among others. To meet this challenge the UK needs to be free to make our own independent agreements with those nations and remove restrictions on our

own economy. As Boris points out, even Peter Mandelson once claimed that EU regulation cost us four per cent of GDP, while others, less Europhile in view, have suggested higher figures. As he also says, we will have great opportunities to improve our agriculture, fishing and indirect taxation. The latter is of importance throughout the economy, as the EU-mandated VAT system is complex and arbitrary.

The positivity of Boris Johnson uses the setting of our account with the EU to boost public services. He wants to deliver on the promise to ensure better funding of the NHS by using the money we will save by leaving the EU, £10 billion, or nearly £200 million a week. That will come straight away as long as we do not agree some unnecessary divorce payout, and the next £150 million, which was implied if not formally pledged by the Leave campaign, can be found if we can grow

our economy. The tax reform that Boris suggests is the way to achieve this. As the cuts in corporation tax so far, so revenue can increase sharply at lower rates. In addition to the extra funding, control of our own regulations will enhance the ability of the UK to lead the world in areas such as biosciences.

Needless to say, Boris' critics, a small but noisy group, see this as a leadership bid, but in truth it helps the Government and boosts Mrs May. As the foreign secretary he is quite reasonably setting out an enthusiastic case for Britain's future position in the world. That is what he ought to do: it is part of his job. He is loyally putting forward Government policy as outlined by the Prime Minister in her Lancaster House speech, and is doing so with panache to explain why this approach will benefit the nation. Not for Boris sly anonymous briefings allegedly by friends; instead a double page spread in *The Daily Telegraph* promoting the

cause of conservatism in the nation. Good and successful governments need a variety of talents. It is essential they manage the job of administering well, that routine decisions are implemented effectively. But in addition they must spell out their message to maintain the support of their nation and the confidence of the electorate. Boris has given a lift to us all. It will help us negotiate from a position of strength and shows that the Government has a true vision of where the country is going. It is an excellent preparation for the party conference season, as it shows the Conservatives are leading the Brexit agenda, not just responding to its critics. It helps Mrs May, for he is her choice for foreign secretary and is promoting her policy.

Finally, it shows that the melancholic desire to "manage decline" has been cast aside at last, and could put this government on a par with Mrs Thatcher's.

News

Johnson accuses senior official of 'distorting' words over £350m



Finest hour Theresa May donned long black leather gloves as she and husband Philip attended a service at Westminster Abbey to mark the 77th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. The Prime Minister was joined at the annual event, which remembers the pilots and aircrew of the Royal Air Force who lost their lives, by the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall as well as Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour leader. Survivors of the Second World War RAF campaign, dubbed The Few, were applauded by members of the congregation as they left the abbey following a moving service.

By Gordon Rayner

BORIS JOHNSON last night accused the head of the statistics watchdog of "wilfully distorting" his words in an extraordinary spat over the claim that Britain will gain £350million per week from Brexit.

Within minutes, Mr Johnson's spokesman was texting again. "We stand by what we said earlier regarding the call with David Norgrove and the £350million figure. The Foreign Secretary then fired off a 550-word letter to Sir David, accusing him of a "complete misrepresentation" of his claims about Brexit and urged him to withdraw the criticism. Where Sir David had been "surprised and disappointed"

so, said Sir David. Less than an hour later, a spokesman for the UK Statistics Authority said: "Sir David Norgrove does not believe the issues lie solely with the headlines. He has not changed the conclusion set out in his letter."

The Foreign Secretary engaged in a tit-for-tat public row with Sir David Norgrove, chairman of the UK Statistics Authority, during which each man effectively accused the other of lying.

Last year Sir David rubbished claims made by Mr Johnson during the Leave campaign that Britain would be £350million per week better off when it left the EU, saying rebates and EU subsidies to the UK meant the net figure was almost £200million lower.

In an article published in Saturday's *Daily Telegraph*, Mr Johnson revisited the claim, saying that: "We will take back control of roughly £350million per week. It would be a fine thing...if a lot of that money went on the NHS."

A front-page article about his essay was headlined: "Boris: Yes, we will take back £350m from EU for NHS."

Sir David, a former private secretary to Margaret Thatcher, wrote to Mr Johnson yesterday saying he was "surprised and disappointed" that the claim had been repeated by him. He accused him of "a clear misuse of official statistics". He wrote: "I am surprised and disappointed that you have chosen to repeat the figure of £350million per week, in connection with the amount that might be available for extra public spending when we leave the European Union. This confuses gross and net contributions. It also assumes that payments currently made to the UK by the EU, including for example for the support of agriculture and scientific research, will not be paid by the UK government when we leave."

Mr Johnson hit back, with his spokesman texting lobby journalists: "Boris has spoken to Norgrove and he has made clear that he was complaining about the headlines and not Boris' piece and, in fact, admitted that Boris' wording in the piece was absolutely fine." Not

by Mr Johnson's claims, Mr Johnson was "surprised and disappointed by your letter". He said it was "based on what appeared to be a wilful distortion of the text of my article".

He said that "taking back control" of £350million was not the same as saying there would be an extra £350million available for public spending and "I am amazed that you should impute such a statement to me". The letter ends: "If you had any concerns about my article, it would be of course have been open to you to address the points with me in private rather than in this way in a public letter. As it is, if you seriously disagree with any of the above, I look forward to hearing your reasoning." A spokesman for Sir David said the letter "doesn't alter his view".

Hetan Shah, of the Royal Statistical Society, said Mr Johnson was playing a "dangerous game" in seeking to "undermine" the independent regulator of public statistics, Chuka Umunna, of Labour, said: "The £350million figure and, in fact, admitted that Boris' wording in the piece was absolutely fine." Not



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